

CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication: Beauty's Release

Other known title(s): Not stated

OFLC ref: 1400248.000

Medium: Book

Author: Anne Rice, writing as A.N. Roquelaure

Publisher: Sphere

Country of origin: United States

Language: English

Applicant: Auckland Council

Classification:	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.
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Descriptive note: Contains sex scenes.

Display conditions: When the book is on public display, the classification given to the book must be shown by way of a label issued in accordance with a direction under s36(A)(2) of the FVPC Act.

Date of entry in Register: 13 August 2014

Date of direction to issue a label: 13 August 2014

Date of notice of decision: No notice of decision has been issued

Summary of reasons for decision:

'Beauty's Release' is a paperback novel of erotic fiction written by Anne Rice, first published in 1988. It was classified by the Indecent Publications Tribunal in 1993 as Indecent in the hands of persons under the age of 18 years, under the Indecent Publications Act 1963. It has been submitted by the Auckland Libraries under s42 of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 for a reconsideration of that classification, because of the time that has elapsed since that initial decision.

The book is the third instalment in Rice's 'Sleeping Beauty' trilogy. It follows the sexual adventures of the two protagonists, Beauty and Laurent, two royal sex slaves. In this book they are taken by boat to an Arabic sultanate, where they engage in sexual activity with the Sultan, his subordinates and his wives. They are returned to Europe where Beauty is to be married off and

Laurent is made to work as a human pony. Eventually the two embark on a life together.

The availability of the book is likely to be injurious to the public good unless restricted to persons aged 16 and over, due to its extensive sexual content. The book has little storyline but is devoted to descriptions of the protagonists' sexual activity. Activity is of a 'BDSM' nature where characters enjoy both inflicting and suffering pain and some degree of degradation as part of mutually-enjoyable activity. Acts are described at length and in detail with the intention of arousing the reader. However the manner in which the book is written is quite light-hearted and whimsical in tone, which reduces the impact of the explicit descriptions. The overall tone is of playful erotic tension.

A degree of maturity and sexual knowledge is required to interpret the book in its intended erotica context. For younger persons, to be exposed prematurely to sexual content of this nature is likely to have a negative effect on their sexual development. Older teenagers, who are likely to have some degree of sexual knowledge, should be able to gauge that the content is fictitious and intended to arouse. Thus the restriction may be lowered from its previous R18 classification to R16. Reducing the restriction reflects current classification legislation and contemporary attitudes to sex. A higher restriction would not be reasonable and demonstratively justifiable in this case. This restriction is the minimum necessary in order to prevent likely injury to the public good, in accordance with the protections on the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.